

Since its establishment in 1911, United Neighborhood Centers of America (UNCA) and its member organizations have continued the long-standing settlement house tradition of creating opportunities and strengthening neighborhood support networks for working poor families. Located throughout the nation, UNCA's member organizations operate neighborhood centers that are hubs of opportunity for children, adults, and older Americans. "From the start, UNCA and its members have been dedicated to building community with and increasing opportunities for families according to their unique circumstances," says UNCA President Ian Bautista. "Our member centers provide an accessible place for families to find support, resources and development opportunities that will help them achieve long-term success."



# PILLSBURY UNITED COMMUNITIES

MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.

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Award-winning program: Fathers and Children Together (FACT) transitional housing  
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CHILDREN DO WELL WHEN THEIR FAMILIES  
DO WELL, AND FAMILIES DO BETTER WHEN  
THEY LIVE IN SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES

2007 FAMILY STRENGTHENING AWARDS

## FATHER FOCUSED, AS A MATTER OF FACT

For chronically homeless men who have custody of their children, finding a father-focused and family-friendly housing program can be a challenge. But in Minneapolis, the Fathers and Children Together (FACT) transitional housing program is tailoring comprehensive services specifically to meet this need. The FACT program annually serves 45 homeless families led by African-American fathers—most of whom are single parents. Ninety percent of the families enter the program from emergency shelters. These fathers often face myriad issues: limited education, criminal histories, mental health issues, limited work experience and other barriers to economic stability.

In Minnesota, blacks make up roughly 40 percent of the homeless population, although they represent 3 percent of the general population. The FACT program offers services that are sensitive to the experience of its residents as African-American men and parents. Over the course of two years, the program provides each family with affordable housing, employment assistance, youth programs, therapy and connections to other agencies, empowering men to successfully raise their children and also achieve greater self-sufficiency.



WE CREATE A COMMUNITY OF FATHERS WHO CAN UNDERSTAND, SUPPORT AND AFFIRM EACH OTHER. THROUGH OUR COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES AND THIS SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY, MEN ARE ABLE TO BUILD A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR THEIR FAMILIES.

—Harry Ford, director of Emerge Villages, an affiliate of Pillsbury United Communities

## MORE THAN A HOME

Families in the FACT program live in subsidized apartments scattered throughout Minneapolis. A case manager visits weekly and helps families assess needs, develop goals, create budgets and access community resources. The program helps parents apply for housing subsidies and permanent housing programs. About 70 percent of families retain their housing for at least six months after the program. “Ultimately, we want fathers to overcome barriers and enhance the quality of life for their families with stable jobs and a secure place to live,” says Harry Ford, director of Emerge Villages, which includes the FACT program. Emerge began in 2006 as an affiliate of Pillsbury United Communities, the Minneapolis settlement house organization with roots since 1879.

In neighborhood centers, families can receive mental health counseling, employment training, job placement and emergency financial assistance. Through a partnership with Sanctuary Community Development Corporation, fathers with limited work experience can participate in job readiness classes to develop confidence and learn soft skills. A local credit union annually teaches a financial literacy class and helps families open bank accounts. African American Family Services provides culture-specific drug abuse treatment for families. “We are connected to many partners who can address many different needs,” Ford says. “This comprehensive approach is vital to effectively helping families.”

But FACT is also about more than services. It’s a community. Says Ford: “The men learn to find support in each other and in the resources of the broader community, so they have a strong network to help them achieve success.”

## FAMILIES COUNT FAMILY STRENGTHENING AWARDS

Through a joint venture of the Annie E. Casey Foundation and United Neighborhood Centers of America (UNCA), the FAMILIES COUNT Family Strengthening Awards recognize UNCA member organizations with outstanding programs that work to give children what they need most—strong, capable and economically successful families. Responding to the varied needs of the families they serve, these organizations improve the economic prospects of working men and women and create the services and networks of support that all families need to realize their aspirations for themselves and their children.